

## AP-NORC poll: Most in US oppose major role in Russia strife

By **NOMAAN MERCHANT**  
and **HANNAH FINGERHUT**  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** —

There's little support among Americans for a major U.S. role in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, according to a new poll, even as President Joe Biden imposes new sanctions and threatens a stronger response that could provoke retaliation from Moscow.

Biden has acknowledged a growing likelihood that war in Eastern Europe would affect Americans, though he has ruled out sending troops to Ukraine. Gas prices in the U.S. could rise in the short term. And Rus-

sian President Vladimir Putin has a range of tools he could use against the U.S., including cyberattacks hitting critical infrastructure and industries. "Defending freedom will have costs for us as well, here at home," Biden said Tuesday. "We need to be honest about that." Just 26% say the U.S. should have a major role in the conflict, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Fifty-two percent say a minor role; 20% say none at all.

The findings are a reminder for Biden and fellow Democrats that while the crisis may consume Washing-



This image provided by The White House via Twitter shows President Joe Biden at Camp David, Md., Feb. 12, 2022.

Associated Press

ton in the coming months, pocketbook issues are likely to be a bigger priority for voters heading into

the midterm elections. A December AP-NORC poll showed that Americans are particularly focused on

economic issues, including rising inflation.

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# AP-NORC poll: Most in US oppose major role in Russia strife

Continued from Front

The Biden administration has argued that supporting Ukraine is a defense of fundamental American values and has made a concerted effort to declassify intelligence findings underscoring the dangers it sees for Ukraine and the wider European region. But the survey shows widespread public skepticism of the U.S. intelligence community.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to think the U.S. should have a major role in the conflict, 32% to 22%. Overall, the poll shows 43% of Americans now approve of Biden's handling of the U.S. relationship with Russia, a downtick from 49% in June of last year.

Despite the clear reluctance about major involvement in the conflict, Americans are hardly looking at Russia through rose-colored glasses. The poll finds 53% say they're very or extremely concerned that Russia's influence around the world poses a threat to the U.S., an uptick from 45% in August 2021.

Jennifer Rau, a 51-year-old mother of three adopted teenagers who lives on Chicago's South Side, said she listens to local public radio for her world news. But in recent days, when the news turns to Russia and Ukraine, she has started to turn it off. "I'm so frustrated. It's enough. We're bombarded," Rau said. "There are other stories in Chicago that need to be covered." Rau is a political independent who voted for Biden. But she believes the U.S. gets involved in foreign wars to make money. She is more concerned about rising crime in Chicago, the prevalence of guns, and systemic racism that affects her three children, who are Hispanic.

"I just feel like there's a war going on in the United States, every day, in Chicago," she said. "And it is really scary. And I feel like no one helps us."

Edward Eller, a 67-year-old retiree from Shady Valley, Tennessee, said the White House needs to focus on



Ukrainian servicemen walk to an outpost on the frontline in the Luhansk region, eastern Ukraine, Jan. 29, 2022.

Associated Press

lowering oil prices.

"They want to send millions of dollars of ours to stop a war that we have nothing to do with," he said. "I'm sorry they're involved in a mess, but it's not our problem." The poll was conducted Friday to Monday during a period of rapidly escalating tensions, culminating with Putin recognizing the independence of two separatist regions in eastern Ukraine, widely seen in the West as a step toward a wider war. Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces have been locked since 2014 in fighting that's killed 14,000 people.

Asked on Tuesday why people in the U.S. should have to sacrifice for the conflict, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said, "This is about standing up for American values."

"We have repeatedly throughout history been leaders in the world in rallying support for any effort to seize territory from another

country," she said.

Russia has massed at least 150,000 troops on three sides of Ukraine and continues to establish bridges, camps, and logistics necessary for a protracted invasion. U.S. officials believe Putin could attack Ukraine at any time. A full-on war in Ukraine could result in thousands of deaths and huge numbers of refugees fleeing for the U.S. or elsewhere in Europe. The U.S. has imposed sanctions on Russian banks and oligarchs with more measures possible this week. The White House has warned in increasingly strong words about a Russian invasion while trying to persuade Putin against launching one. It has declassified Russian troop positions and detailed allegations of "false-flag" plots that could set a pretext for a military attack on Ukraine.

However, the poll shows there remains skepticism among Americans of the U.S. intelligence communi-

ty. Only 23% said they had a "great deal of confidence" in intelligence agencies. Another 52% say they have some confidence and 24% have hardly any.

U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley, an Illinois Democrat who serves on the House Intelligence Committee, says the intelligence he's received on Ukraine "has been very, very good. Sadly, it's been accurate." But he often hears from constituents who are uninterested in Ukraine and more focused on health care and the coronavirus pandemic.

Over time, Quigley said, he has developed comments about why Ukraine matters to the U.S.: its role as a strategic ally and a "sovereign democratic nation at Putin's doorstep," and how a new war could hit already disrupted technology supply chains that use exports from Russia and Ukraine.

Among Russia's biggest threats to Americans is its capability to wage cyberwarfare. Previous Russia-

linked cyberattacks have cut off services at hospitals and breached the servers of American government agencies. A ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline linked to a Russia-based hacking group temporarily shut down gas stations across the East Coast. And Russia was accused of interfering in both the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections. "I think it's an incredibly difficult time to message because of everything else that's topping the list of what Americans care about. It's hard to bump COVID, inflation, safety issues away," Quigley said. "But you've got to try."

The AP-NORC poll of 1,289 adults was conducted Feb. 18-21 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points. □



# U.S. drops name of Trump's 'China Initiative' after criticism

By ERIC TUCKER

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Justice Department is scrapping the name of a Trump-era initiative intended to crack down on economic espionage by Beijing but criticized as unfairly targeting Chinese professors at American colleges because of their ethnicity. The decision to abandon the China Initiative, announced Wednesday by the department's top national security official, follows a months long review undertaken after charges that the program chilled academic collaboration and contributed to anti-Asian bias. The department also endured high-profile setbacks in individual criminal prosecutions that resulted in the last year in the dismissal of multiple criminal cases against academic researchers.

Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen said the department will "be relentless in defending our country from China," but no longer will group its investigations and prosecutions under the China Initiative label, in part out of recognition of the threats facing the U.S. from Russia, Iran, North Korea and others beyond China.

"I'm convinced that we need a broader approach, one that looks across all of these threats and use all of



**Matthew G. Olsen, of Maryland, nominee to be an Assistant Attorney General for the Department of Justice, attends a Senate Judiciary Hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on July 14, 2021**

Associated Press

our authorities to combat them," he told reporters before a speech in which he planned to lay out the changes.

The program was established in 2018 under then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions as a way to thwart what officials said were aggressive efforts by China to steal American intellectual property and to spy on American industry and research.

Olsen told reporters he believed the initiative was prompted by genuine national security concerns. He said he did not believe

investigators had targeted professors on the basis of ethnicity, but he also said he had to be responsive to concerns he heard, including from Asian American groups.

"Anything that creates the impression that the Department of Justice applies different standards based on race or ethnicity harms the department and our efforts, and it harms the public," Olsen said.

The initiative has resulted in convictions, including against hackers accused of breaching the networks of U.S. companies. None-

theless, it came to be most associated with efforts to investigate professors at American universities for concealing ties to the Chinese government on applications for federal grants. Federal prosecutors are still expected to pursue grant fraud cases against researchers when there is evidence of malicious intent, serious fraud and a connection to economic and national security, with prosecutors from the department's National Security Division in Washington playing a supervisory role. In some cases, prosecutors

may opt for civil or administrative solutions instead of criminal charges.

Wednesday's announcement follows multiple cases in which the department has either dismissed its own prosecutions or had them thrown out by judges.

In January, the department dropped its case against Gang Chen, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor charged in the final days of the Trump administration. Prosecutors concluded that they could no longer meet their burden of proof after they received information from the Department of Energy suggesting that he had not been required to disclose certain information on his forms.

Olsen said the department continued to stand by cases that are pending against professors and researchers. FBI Director Christopher Wray said in a speech last month that the threat from China was "more brazen" than ever, with the FBI opening new cases to counter Chinese intelligence operations every 12 hours or so.

"I'm not taking any tools off the table here," Olsen said. In his speech at George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School, he noted that despite the diverse range of threats, "it is clear that the government of China stands apart." □

## USPS gets final signoff to order new delivery vehicles

By DAVID SHARP

Associated Press

**(AP)** — The U.S. Postal Service said Wednesday it cleared the final regulatory hurdle to placing orders for next-generation mail vehicles — and getting some of them on delivery routes next year — despite pushback from the Environmental Protection Agency. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said the completion of an evaluation required by the National Environmental Policy Act is an important milestone for postal carriers who have soldiered

on with overworked delivery trucks that went into service between 1987 to 1994. The U.S. Postal Service's fleet comprises more than 230,000 vehicles, including 190,000 local delivery vehicles that are due to be replaced.

"The men and women of the U.S. Postal Service have waited long enough for safer, cleaner vehicles," DeJoy said in a statement. Environmental groups have pushed back because only 10% of the vehicles would be electric-powered under the Postal Service contract

with the manufacturer, Wisconsin-based Oshkosh Defense. The decision published in the Federal Register allows the Postal Service to proceed with placing the first order that will include at least 5,000 electric-powered vehicles, along with an undetermined number of gas-powered vehicles, Postal Service spokesperson Kim Frum said.

The Postal Service believes it has met all its obligations and is moving forward despite criticism by the Environmental Protection Agency over the adequacy



**In this Aug. 18, 2020, file photo, mail delivery vehicles are parked outside a post office in Boys Town, Neb.**

Associated Press

of the environmental review.

"After signing the contract to procure these vehicles one year ago, the Postal Service conducted a fundamentally flawed environmental analysis that under-

estimates the costs of gasoline-fueled vehicles and overestimates the costs associated with electric vehicles," Vicki Arroyo, EPA's associate administrator for policy, said Wednesday in a statement. □



# Police union sues over Philadelphia ban on low-level stops

By **CLAUDIA LAUER**

The Associated Press

**PHILADELPHIA (AP)** — The Philadelphia Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police filed a lawsuit seeking to invalidate a city law banning officers from pulling over drivers for low-level offenses, saying the law illegally preempts existing state laws on traffic violations. The lawsuit, filed in Common Pleas Court on Tuesday by the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 5 and several of the union's leaders as individual citizens of Philadelphia, also argues that the First Class City Home Rule Act prevents Philadelphia from creating a law counter to those already in place throughout the rest of the state.

The lawsuit asks for declaratory judgment but does not ask for an injunction that would stop the law from going into effect March 3. City officials had initially said enforcement would begin Thursday. The law will prohibit officers from pulling over vehicles solely for a handful of traffic offenses deemed "secondary violations," such as improperly displayed registration or inspection stickers, and single broken taillights.

In a news release announcing the lawsuit Wednesday, Lodge leaders called the



Shown are Philadelphia Police vehicles on a traffic stop in Philadelphia, June 24, 2021.

Associated Press

city law irresponsible, saying it would promote unsafe driving without consequences.

Philadelphia is the largest city government in the U.S. to pass a ban on what are sometimes called pretextual stops. Its Driving Equality Bill was passed by the City Council and later enacted through a mayoral executive order in November.

Kevin Lessard, a spokesman for Mayor Jim Kenney, said in a statement that city officials don't believe the measure jeopardizes public safety and they don't

expect the lawsuit to stop its enforcement.

"The FOP distorts the text and purpose of the Achieving Driving Equality bill and Executive Order, which were needed and implemented to address the disproportionate number of traffic stops experienced by people of color in Philadelphia," Lessard said.

Critics say the practice has led to Black and Latino motorists being unfairly stopped and searched at disproportionately high rates and sometimes being detained for small in-

fractions. The Defender Association of Philadelphia projected that the enforcement change could mean as many as 300,000 fewer police encounters a year. The practice has also led to a handful of high-profile deaths: Sandra Bland in Texas, Walter Scott in South Carolina and Daunte Wright in Minnesota were all initially pulled over for pretextual stops.

The lawsuit alleges the law "creates a new class of offenses that law enforcement officers are prohibited from enforcing—impermissibly amending legislation enacted by the General Assembly."

Advocates for law enforcement say such stops can uncover illegal drugs and weapons, noting that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1996 that they were acceptable.

"This is not the issue of reform that they are trying to paint it as. It really hurts the whole city," said FOP Lodge 5 President John McNesby, who is listed in his individual and professional capacity as a plaintiff.

McNesby said he believes insurance companies will raise rates over the number of drivers without valid registrations, inspections and other issues barred from stops in the city's measure. He also said he fears criminals will be emboldened if they know they won't be pulled over.

"This isn't a Black issue, a brown issue, a white issue, an Asian issue or a Hispanic issue. This is a city issue, a community issue and a safety issue," McNesby said. "Officers don't go out and say I'm going to stop seven Hispanic people today. They stop people who are not obeying the state's Motor Vehicle Code. So the issue would be solved if people drove cars that are legal and drove them safely." □



Attorney Mark Pomerantz arrives at Federal Court in New York, Aug. 12, 2002.

Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The two prosecutors in charge of the Manhattan district attorney's criminal investigation into former President Donald Trump and his business dealings suddenly re-

## Prosecutors in charge of Trump criminal probe have resigned

signed Wednesday, throwing the future of the probe into question.

A spokesperson for District Attorney Alvin Bragg confirmed the resignations of Carey Dunne and former mafia prosecutor Mark Pomerantz. Both started on the probe under former District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. and were asked to stay when Bragg took office in January.

Dunne, the office's former general counsel, argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in a successful fight for Trump's tax records. Pomerantz was brought out of private practice by Vance last year to add his expertise in white collar investigations to the probe.

"We are grateful for their service," said Bragg's spokesperson, Danielle Filson. She declined to comment further, saying the investigation is ongoing.

The New York Times, citing sources, reported that Dunne and Pomerantz quit after Bragg raised doubts about pursuing a case against Trump.

The D.A.'s office investigation led to tax fraud charges last July against Trump's company, the Trump Organization, and its longtime finance chief, Allen Weisselberg.

Weisselberg was accused of collecting more than \$1.7 million in off-the-books compensation, including apartment rent, car pay-

ments and school tuition. He and the company have pleaded not guilty.

On Tuesday, lawyers for Weisselberg and the Trump Organization filed court papers seeking to throw out the case. Weisselberg's lawyers argued the D.A.'s office was targeting him as punishment because he wouldn't flip on the former president.

Just last month, Bragg said he was proud of the continuity that Dunne and Pomerantz had brought in running the high-profile investigation through the transition from Vance's administration to his leadership.

"I do think the one continuity is the staffing and

(Vance) brought on incredible lawyers to do it," Bragg said in a Jan. 20 question-and-answer session with reporters.

"And they've been dedicated and we've been working and keeping them in place and thinking about the kind of resources to continue the investigation in order to then be in a position to make" decisions on the direction of the probe, Bragg said.

Bragg, limited by ethics rules from discussing the case in detail, said at the time that he was getting up to speed on the Trump investigation and that he would "follow the facts." He didn't offer a timeline for a charging decision. □



# U.N. ends Iraq's requirement to pay victims of Kuwait invasion

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press

**UNITED NATIONS (AP)** — The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously Tuesday to end Iraq's requirement to compensate victims of its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, with Baghdad having paid out more than \$50 billion to 1.5 million claimants.

Michael Gaffey, Ireland's ambassador to the U.N. in Geneva and president of the governing board of the U.N. Compensation Commission, whose fund decided on the claims, told the council after the vote that the body's work was a "historic achievement for the United Nations and for effective multilateralism."

"Ultimately, 2.7 million claims were submitted to the commission seeking \$352 billion in compensation," he said, and the \$52.4 billion awarded to 1.5 million claimants "represents approximately 15% of the total claims." Under a Security Council resolution adopted in April 1991 after a U.S.-led coalition routed Saddam Hussein's forces and liberated Kuwait in the first Gulf War, Iraq was required to set aside a percentage of proceeds from its oil exports for the fund to compensate victims of the



People shop in Al Sarai antiques market in Baghdad, Iraq, Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022.

Associated Press

conflict. That share was 5% in 2013, when the council voted to end the possible military enforcement of several requirements imposed on Iraq after the invasion in recognition of improved relations with Kuwait. The level stood at 3% for Iraq's final payment on Jan. 13. Gaffey said the governing council adopted its final decision on Feb. 9 declaring that Iraq's government

had fulfilled its international obligations to compensate for losses and damages suffered as a direct result of its unlawful invasion of Kuwait. He said the fund's governing council gave priority to claims by individuals who were forced to leave Iraq or Kuwait, to those who suffered injuries or whose spouse, child or parent died, or who suffered personal losses of

up to \$100,000. He said this humanitarian decision "marked a significant step in the evolution of international claims practice." But there were also companies and businesses that received funds. Kuwait Petroleum Corporation successfully claimed \$14.7 billion for oil production and sales losses resulting from damage to the country's oil fields during the 1990-91

Iraqi invasion and occupation. The Security Council resolution adopted Tuesday affirms that Iraq has fulfilled its international obligations, that "Iraq is no longer required to deposit a percentage of proceeds from export sales of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas into the fund," and that the commission's claims process "is now complete and final and that no further claims shall be made to the commission." The council terminated the commission's mandate under the 1991 resolution and ordered it to conclude outstanding matters so it can close by the end of 2022. Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein told the council that his country has concluded "an important 30-years-long chapter and embarks on a new chapter in its diplomatic, political and economic journey." "This will be an era of a more prominent regional and international role, commensurate with Iraq's historical and cultural significance for the region and the world, an era during which Iraq will be an active member committed to the aspirations and goals of the international community," he said. □

## Amsterdam Apple shop hostage-taker sought 200M-euro ransom

**AMSTERDAM (AP)** — A gunman who held a hostage for hours in the Apple Store in Amsterdam demanded a ransom of 200 million euros (more than \$226 million) in cryptocurrencies before he was run over by police as he chased his hostage out of the shop, police and prosecutors said Wednesday.

The tense, five-hour standoff paralyzed one of Amsterdam's most popular nightlife neighborhoods for hours Tuesday as scores of heavily armed police surrounded the store, managing to free about 70 people from the building that houses the shop before the suspect was detained.

Police Chief Frank Paauw said the suspect, a 27-year-old man from Amsterdam armed with a handgun and an automatic weapon and wearing camouflaged clothing, was run over by police as he chased his fleeing hostage. The hostage was a Bulgarian man, police said. They didn't release his identity.

"The hostage played a sort of hero's role by, in that split second that he had, forcing a breakthrough in this situation," Paauw said at a news conference in the early hours of the morning. "Otherwise it could have been a very long and unpleasant night and maybe longer."

After the suspect was run over, a robot checked him for explosives as snipers in nearby buildings took aim, green laser beams from their weapons clearly visible in the night sky. In contacts with police, the suspect had threatened to blow himself up.

Police said Wednesday that he had "explosive components," but that they weren't armed. Paauw said the man was taken to a hospital with serious injuries. He remained hospitalized Wednesday under police guard. Police said they were investigating his exact motive. Investigations were continuing Wednesday, including searching two

homes in Amsterdam. The Apple Store was listed on the company's website as being closed Wednesday

and Thursday. Bullet holes could be seen in the store's windows. □



Police vehicles cordon off a wide area in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022, where an armed person is holed up in the Amsterdam Apple Store with at least one hostage in an hours-long standoff with scores of police massed outside.

Associated Press



# Green groups say Romania failing to stop illegal logging

By **STEPHEN McGRATH**

**Associated Press**

**BUCHAREST, Romania (AP)**

— Environmental groups say Romania has failed to tackle illegal logging and nature destruction in areas protected by European Union law, two years after Brussels warned the country to put an end to illicit deforestation.

A new report authored by nongovernmental groups Agent Green, EuroNatur, and ClientEarth, obtained by The Associated Press before its official release, alleges that widespread destruction in Natura 2000 sites — areas of special value that are meant to be protected by EU law — has in some areas intensified since the EU Commission issued warnings in February 2020. The Commission said at the time that Romanian authorities managed forests and authorized logging “without evaluating beforehand the impacts on protected habitats as required” under the bloc’s directives. It gave Romania a month to take measures to “address the shortcomings” and issued final warnings in July 2020.

Gabriel Paun, president of Agent Green, told the AP that instead of curbing ille-



**Investigators from NGO Agent Green monitor what they say is large-scale deforestation and habitat degradation in Natura 2000 sites, in Avrig, Fagaras Mountains, Romania, Sunday, Sept. 5, 2021.**

gal logging in the protected natural areas, Brussels’ infringement procedures triggered what he called “panic logging.”

“The report clearly shows that logging in native forests in protected areas has increased,” Paun said. “This is panic logging in old-growth forests based on a fear that the EU’s biodiversity strategy will become binding for all member states.” He added: “Romania will surely have to face the European Court

of Justice over these protected areas as it has failed to comply with EU nature laws.”

The campaign groups’ report found that “the Romanian government has done very little to stop the ongoing degradation of the Natura 2000 sites” and the “threat to these protected natural forest ecosystems remains constant and widespread.”

The three environmental groups will this week call on the Commission to refer

the case to the European Court of Justice, the bloc’s highest court.

Romania, an EU member since 2007, is home to vast areas of primary forests measuring around half a million hectares. They are mostly situated in the country’s Carpathian Mountains, out of a total forest cover of around 7 million hectares which provide habitat for large mammals like bears, wolves, and Eurasian lynx. But successive Romanian governments have strug-

gled to prevent widespread illegal logging, which some describe as being carried out by a “wood mafia.”

Over a three-month period between August and October last year, Agent Green investigators monitored 41 locations within four Natura 2000 sites each the subject of EU infringement procedures using a combination of fieldwork, satellite imagery, and data from a national, public database of logging permits.

“Romania’s persistent failure to act means the situation in Romanian forests has gone from bad to worse,” said Agata Szafraniuk, a ClientEarth wildlife and habitats lawyer. “If the European Commission does not escalate Romania’s clear disregard of EU nature laws before the EU’s highest court, the future of these important forests looks dire.” In a statement to the AP after seeing the report, a spokesperson at Romania’s environment ministry said there was “no evidence that logging activities have increased since the start of the infringement procedure” and that measures the ministry implemented last year are effectively tackling illegal logging. □

**Associated Press**



**Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying reacts during the daily press conference at the Foreign Ministry in Beijing, Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

**BEIJING (AP)** — China on Wednesday accused the U.S. of creating “fear and panic” over the crisis in Ukraine, and called for talks to reduce rapidly building tensions.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said

China is opposed to new unilateral sanctions imposed on Russia, reiterating a longstanding Chinese position.

She said the U.S. was fueling tensions by providing defensive weapons to Ukraine, without mention-

## China says U.S. creating ‘fear and panic’ over Ukraine

ing Russia’s deployment of as many as 190,000 troops on the Ukrainian border. Hua also did not mention efforts by the U.S., France and others to engage Russia diplomatically.

China-Russia ties have grown closer under Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin at talks in Beijing earlier this month. The two sides issued a joint statement backing Moscow’s opposition to a NATO expansion in former Soviet republics and buttressing China’s claim to the self-governing island of Taiwan. “On the Ukraine issue, unlike the U.S., which keeps sending weapons to

Ukraine, creating fear and panic and even playing up the threat of war, China has been calling on all parties to respect and pay attention to each other’s legitimate security concerns, work together to solve problems through negotiations and consultations, and maintain regional peace and stability,” Hua said at a daily briefing.

The outcome of the Ukraine crisis is seen as having ramifications for China over its threat to invade Taiwan, a close U.S. ally, and its border dispute with India and its claims in the South China and East China seas, where it has raised concerns over conflict with Japan, the

Philippines and others.

Hua said those accusing China of contradicting its stance on respecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity in relation to Russia’s moves toward Ukraine were “either driven by ulterior motives or deliberately distorting or misinterpreting China.”

“To correctly and objectively understand the Ukraine situation and seek a rational and peaceful solution, it is necessary to understand the merits of the Ukraine issue and properly address relevant countries’ legitimate security concerns on the basis of equality and mutual respect,” Hua said. □



## 'We need help': Another cyclone batters Madagascar

By LAETITIA BEZAIN

Associated Press

**ANTANANARIVO, Madagascar (AP)** — Cyclone Emnati crashed into the southeastern coast of Madagascar in the early hours of Wednesday, ripping roofs off houses and raising fears of flooding and food shortages in a region still recovering from the destruction inflicted by another tropical storm just weeks ago. More than 30,000 people were moved to safe accommodation before Emnati arrived and Madagascar's National Office for Risk and Disaster Management estimates more than 250,000 people could be impacted by the latest cyclone.

There were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries from Emnati as authorities waited for the worst to pass, but local officials and witnesses reported extensive damage to houses and other buildings in at least one southeastern city. Madagascar, an island off the east coast of Africa renowned for its wildlife and unspoiled natural treasures, has now been hit by four major tropical storms in the last month, killing nearly 200 people already and compounding issues of food insecurity. A drought in the south of the country left around 400,000 at risk of starvation last year, according to the U.N. World Food Program. The cyclones have again



People outside ruined homes in Mananjary, Madagascar, Feb. 10, 2022. The island of Madagascar off the east coast of Africa is bracing for yet another cyclone having already been hit by three major tropical storms in the last month.

Associated Press

underlined how climate change may be affecting weather patterns and putting lives at risk in vulnerable places like Madagascar. The U.N. weather agency previously warned of more "high-impact tropical cyclones" that are linked to climate change hitting the region.

A string of aid agencies said that Emnati will be a double blow for the eastern and southeastern regions that were hit by Cyclone Batsirai early this month. Batsirai ultimately left more than 120 people dead and displaced 143,000. More than 20,000 houses were destroyed or damaged by

Batsirai, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said, and more than 21,000 people remain displaced.

The U.N. humanitarian office said before Emnati arrived that it was in "a race against time" to protect people again.

Emnati made landfall around midnight local time in the district of Manakara Atsimo in the southeast, with average sustained winds of 135 kph (84 mph) and gusts as strong as 190 kph (118 mph), Madagascar's Department of Meteorology said. Six regions in the southeast are on red alert, most of them already

hard-hit by Batsirai.

"We can't go out so it's hard to see what happened but from what I can see from the gendarmerie barracks, there's a lot of damage. Many houses no longer have roofs," said Lt. Col. Harinaivo Randriamihajamanana, the commander of the Gendarmerie Group in the Fitovinany region and based in the city of Manakara. "We have not received any calls because the telephone communication has been very disrupted. We have had no electricity and water since yesterday (Tuesday) morning."

The Emnati system had

weakened as it worked its way over the Indian Ocean toward Madagascar, the meteorology department said, but it warned that flooding was still likely.

Manakara resident Gabriel Filiastre said his family joined others in taking refuge inside the main hall of a hotel where he works as Emnati hit.

"My house is completely flooded," Filiastre said. "We couldn't sleep inside. It's a wooden house. I saw a lot of houses around our house that are destroyed. For us, this cyclone did more damage than the one before."

"Even in the hotel there is a lot of damage. One of the walls collapsed ... the roof tiles have been blown away and some of the ceilings of the rooms have collapsed. We need help."

The U.N. World Food Program and other aid organizations have warned of the risk of critical food shortages due to crops being destroyed and transport links disrupted. Forecasters have also predicted eight to 12 more cyclones in the Madagascar region before the cyclone season normally ends in May.

Emnati is expected to cross the southeastern part of Madagascar and spin out to sea again, according to the meteorology department, meaning it should miss mainland Africa, where previous cyclones have also caused deaths and destruction. □

## 3 wounded as police clash with Haiti factory workers

By EVENS SANON

Associated Press

**PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti**

**(AP)** — Men wearing police uniforms fired into a group of people at a protest on Wednesday after thousands of Haitian factory workers launched a new strike to demand higher wages than those the prime minister announced earlier this week.

Associated Press journalists observed the men fire from a car with police license plates as the day's protest

appeared to be winding down. At least three people were seen to be wounded, including two journalists covering the event.

A police spokesperson could not be immediately reached for comment and the condition of the wounded people wasn't immediately clear.

Earlier, police had fired tear gas as protesters threw rocks at them and used trucks to block a main road near the international airport in Port-au-Prince.

It was the first day of a three-day strike organized by factory workers who also shut down an industrial park earlier this month to protest pay, which then was about 500 gourdes (\$4.80) for nine hours of work a day.

Prime Minister Ariel Henry announced minimum wage hikes late Sunday in an attempt to quell the protests. But the increase of 185 gourdes (\$1.80) a day for factory workers only served to enrage them.

"Can you imagine? I have



People stand around a man who was injured by gunfire during a protest by factory workers demanding higher salaries in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022.

Associated Press

two kids, and I have to pay a home," said 38-year-old André Saintil. "The government is keeping us in mis-

ery." "People can't do anything with this miserable salary," said Jean Wilkens Pierre. □



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## Paseo Herencia is always fun and exciting to visit



**NOORD— Paseo Herencia offers a variety of shopping, dining and entertainment options in an outdoor center located in the heart of Palm Beach.**

### Shopping

The Paseo Herencia stores

offer a great collection in beach wear, clothing, perfume, shoes, jewelry, souvenirs and much more. Pamper yourself by visiting Maggy's and enjoy their salon services and shop for your favorite beauty products. Aruba Aloe has

that perfect gift to bring back home, all made with natural ingredients. Other brand favorites are Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Aldo, Carmen Steffens, Quiksilver, Pandora and many more.

### Restaurants

Start with a breakfast meal at Chill Out Island Café for a fluffy souffle pancake with your choice of toppings, breakfast sandwiches or acai bowls plus your favorite bubble tea. TGI Fridays offers breakfast options starting from \$8.57, available all day – every day. Go Argentinian style at Che Bar and try their delicious omelet with chorizo/ham, mozzarella, onions, peppers, and tomatoes served with skillet potatoes



and toast.

These restaurants are also open for lunch and dinner and will delight you with unique tastes. Choices run from Argentinian dishes to, Asian/Caribbean, International and Mexican at amongst others Iguana Cantina. Sip and have a good time at the Bulldog Aruba located in the center of the Plaza. Open till 11pm.

### VIP Cinema

Visit the one-of-a-kind Caribbean Cinemas VIP on the second floor of Paseo Herencia and enjoy your favorite movies with the latest projection and 7.1 Dolby surround sound with a delicious bag of popcorn.

### Entertainment

Kids can enjoy the Paseo kids' activities, carousel & kiddie train, every day from 6pm to 10pm and do not forget to catch the nightly

water shows at 7:30pm, 8:30pm and 9:30pm. Another fun activity is the The Range Airsoft Experience located behind The Lazy Turtle. Snap Instagramable pictures at the Angel Wings located between Pandora and Quiksilver and another one in front of TGI Fridays. Catch a live Show on Friday by violinist Angela Flores and Saturday by the acrobatic group Ritmo Cubano at 8pm on the Plaza Padu.

Also with any purchase at Paseo Herencia you will receive FREE parking in the parking garage. Paseo Herencia has implemented all COVID protocols according to the Aruba Health & Happiness code. It is required to wear face masks when shopping or visiting the mall to ensure a safe environment. To learn more, visit the Paseo Herencia Facebook or Instagram page.

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## Carnaval is back on Aruba!

**ORANJESTAD - Carnaval is celebrated in many countries around the world, but here's the story about how it began in Aruba.**

Carnival was born in 1954 as a series of small street festivals. The Tivoli Club, Aruba's oldest private social club, was the first to have a pre-Lenten celebration in Oranjestad in February 1944. The Allied victory of World War II was commemorated by a large parade in San Nicolas, comprised largely of Caribbean-English immigrants who came to Aruba to work at the Lago Oil Refinery. The first steel and brass bands debuted a few

years later, and small parades sprouted here and there, which later on became the Carnaval that we know and love today.

Besides the Lighting Parade, thousands of participants and spectators enjoy Children's Parades, the Jouvert Morning Pajama Party, the Grand Carnival Parade in San Nicolas, and the exciting finale—the Grand Carnival Parade in Oranjestad. The midnight burning of King Momo, a life-size effigy, signals the end of the Aruba Carnival season. This tradition symbolizes the slumber of the spirit of carnival, who will



rise again when the next season (and a whole new

round of celebrating) begins. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, and many measures taken, Aruba has not been able to celebrate Carnaval for almost 2 consecutive years, however for quite some time now Aruba has been on a steady road to normality, bringing us to where we are today with all measures eliminated. Aruba has set in motion the Exit Strategy to return back to normality and part of this includes that all events and activities that were organized before the coronavirus pandemic started, will be organized once again.

### **National Light Parade 2022**

Aruba will celebrate Carnival on the 26th of February with a National Light Parade. It is organized by CCDN, to start getting accustomed to normality again while also celebrat-

ing our culture.

The theme of this parade will be the 4 colors of the Aruban flag, which are red, yellow, white and blue. There will be 6 groups participating in our National Light Parade, which are Empire, Majestic, Infinity, Dushi, Pink for Life and Royal Carnival Group. There will be renowned local bands performing like D'licious, NBO, Upgrade Music & Jeon, Youth Xtreme, Le Groove and Buleria.

The parade will be from 8pm to 2am, starting at Aruba Entertainment Center in Dakota, goes thru Vondellaan, L.G. Smith Boulevard and finish at the old department of infrastructure (DOW) building near Citgo Boulevard.

We hope to see you there!





## Honoring of Emerald Ambassadors at Divi Phoenix Aruba



**EAGLE BEACH** - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring many

loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing



Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassa-

dor" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees are: Dick and Mary Bart from Massachu-

setts. They have been honored as Emerald Ambassadors because they have been coming to the island for their 36th consecutive year.

They love coming back to the island for its beautiful beaches, friendly people and sunny weather.

Heyliger together with the representatives of the Divi Phoenix Aruba presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □



**ORANJESTAD** - You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a picture from **Harold and Denise Troupe** from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. □

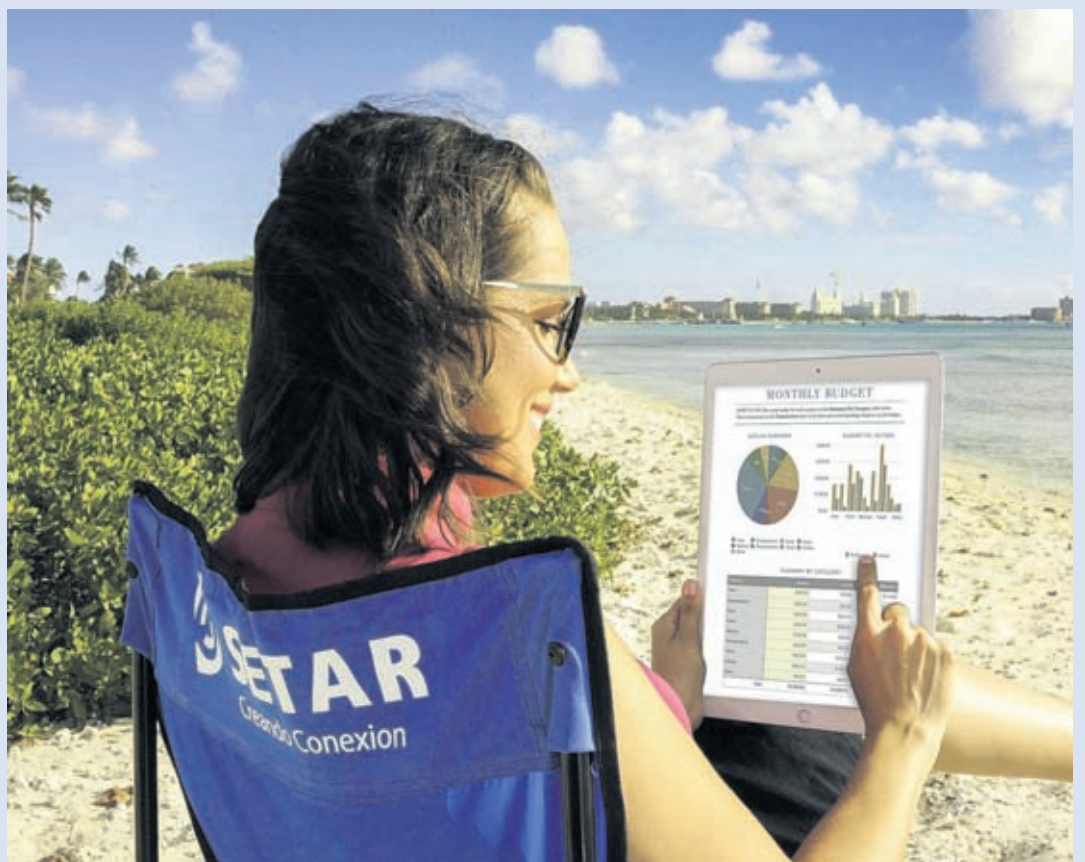
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Visit SETAR Teleshop with locations around the island or at the airport to check your Mi-Fi SIM or device. □





## If your life changed in 2021, watch for income tax surprises

By **ANDY ROSEN**  
of NerdWallet

The events of 2021 didn't always play out as expected. A lingering pandemic, a shifting government response and a wave of career moves meant many people ended the year in a far different place from where they began.

Now, as the income tax filing deadline approaches, those life changes may bring a new wave of surprises for U.S. taxpayers.

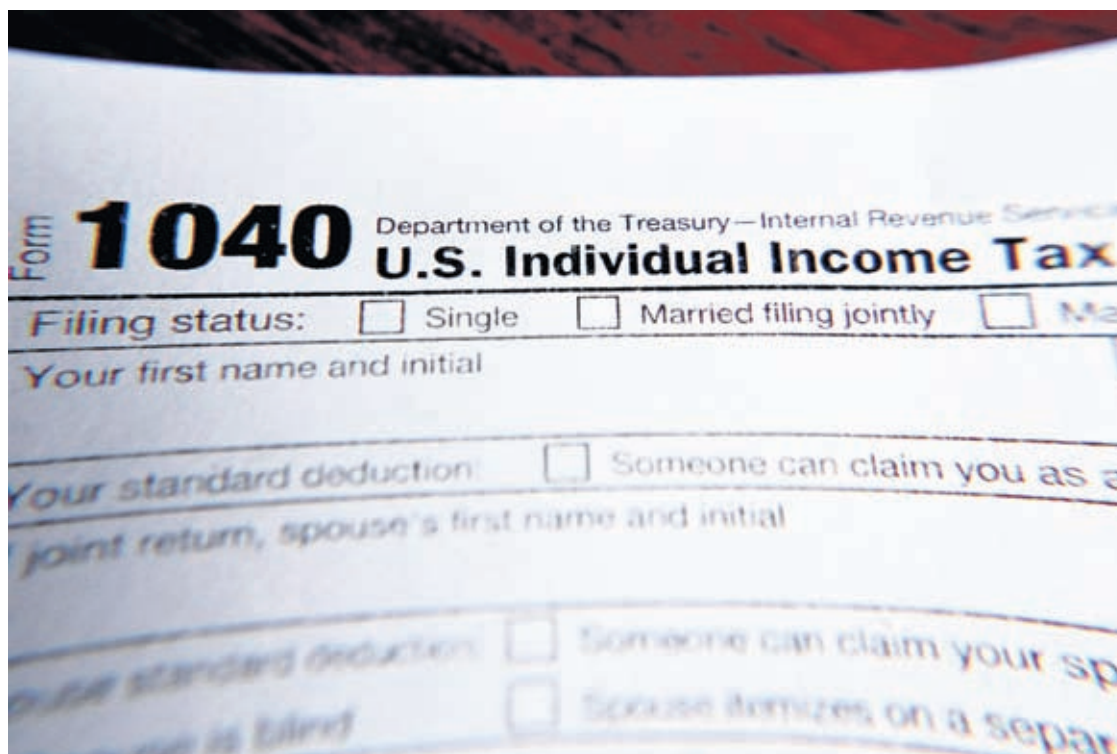
If your income changed, or if you made money in the stock and cryptocurrency boom, you may find a larger-than-usual tax bill. If you welcomed a new child or had major medical expenses, you might qualify for new breaks.

Whatever your situation, it may take longer than you expect to gather information and understand provisions that may not have applied to you before.

"Take nothing for granted. Question everything. Don't make assumptions, even about your own situation," says Akeiva Ellis, a certified public accountant and certified financial planner in Waltham, Massachusetts.

### IF YOU JOINED THE GREAT RESIGNATION

Through November, an average of 3.9 million people quit their jobs each month of 2021, according to the Society for Human Resource Management.



This Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2019 file photo shows part of a 1040 federal tax form printed from the Internal Revenue Service website, in Zelenople, Pa.

That's the highest number since the federal government began publishing the data in 2000. How a career change affects your taxes depends in part on why you left.

**IF YOU GOT A NEW JOB:** You'll get W-2 forms from each employer, and the combined pay reported on those will help you calculate your total income for the year. It's pretty straightforward, as long as you withheld the correct amount.

**IF YOU STARTED WORKING FOR YOURSELF:** People who became their own bosses will have to pay

self-employment taxes; the federal rate is 15.3%. If you have people working for you, you'll be responsible for sending tax forms to contractors or employees. People working for themselves can also manage their tax liability by carefully accounting for both their income and their expenses. "Good records matter," says Kimberly Key, a professor focused on accounting and taxation at Auburn University's Harbert College of Business in Alabama. "2021 is going to help people figure out what they did wrong and try to get things fixed for 2022."

### IF YOU JOINED THE INVESTING BOOM

Trading by individual investors, many using online platforms, reached historic highs during the early part of 2021, according to Nasdaq. Meanwhile, investments in cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin reached all-time records last year.

If you didn't sell any assets, Ellis says, you won't have to pay taxes on them even if your portfolio did well. If you bought and sold investments for the first time in 2021, you'll soon get a crash course on capital gains taxes. You'll have to gather records of your

gains and losses. You'll also want to distinguish between long-term capital gains (typically, for assets held longer than a year) and short-term capital gains (for assets held a year or less). If you bought or sold stock, your brokerage will send you a tax form detailing your activity. Cryptocurrency exchanges, however, are not yet required to do so. In any case, it's critical when filing your taxes to review any records sent by the investment platforms on which you've traded. If you don't receive any records, you can log in to review your history.

### IF YOU WERE AFFECTED BY COVID-19

Perhaps 2021's most discouraging surprise was the persistence of COVID-19, which continued to sicken Americans throughout the year. Even as vaccinations blunted some of the worst outcomes, many suffered from serious illness and significant medical costs. But if you spent more than 7.5% of your income on medical care, it may be possible to write off any expense beyond that threshold.

### IF YOU HAVE KIDS

Anyone with kids — whether or not they joined your family in 2021 — will have to navigate the child tax credit, which saw a one-time expansion under the COVID-19 relief measures enacted early last year. □

Associated Press

## U.S. ports to get \$450M to speed flow of goods, lower prices

By **HOPE YEN**  
Associated Press  
**WASHINGTON (AP)** —

Clogged U.S. ports are being given access to nearly \$450 million in federal money from President Joe Biden's infrastructure law as part of the administration's recent stepped-up efforts aiming to ease supply chain congestion and lower prices for American consumers.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg on Wednesday announced the availability of a first batch of competitive grants for ports

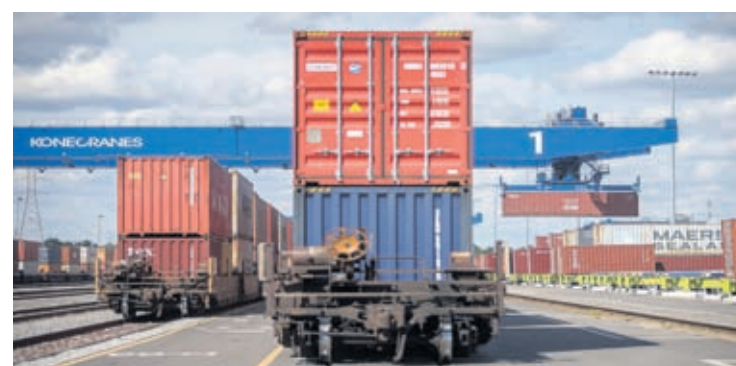
that will be double last year's amount annually for five years. The grants are aimed specifically at reducing bottlenecks that have slowed the flow of goods to store shelves and pushed up costs.

The grants are among several pots of money under the \$1 trillion law that the department intends to steer toward providing mid-term and long-term relief to the nation's supply chain, which administration officials described as somewhat outdated and broken. Still, acknowledging

that the upgrades will take time, Biden officials have largely shied away from any assurances that Americans could see clear and demonstrable changes to their lives before the 2022 midterm elections.

U.S. ports will have until May to apply for the grants, which will be awarded by fall.

"We're proud to announce this funding to help ports improve their infrastructure — to get goods moving more efficiently and help keep costs under control for American families," But-



A rail mounted gantry crane lifts a 40-foot shipping container and loads it onto a rail car at the Georgia Ports Authority Mason Mega Rail Terminal, on Oct. 21, 2021, in Savannah, Ga.

Associated Press

tigieg said.

The Transportation Department was releasing this week a one-year report that assesses the supply chain and how best to fix gaps. Administration officials said the report urges better government coop-

eration and data-sharing with the private sector and pledges up to billions of dollars more from federal grant programs later this year to promote smoother rail, water and truck transportation and build out warehouse capacity. □



# CROSSWORD

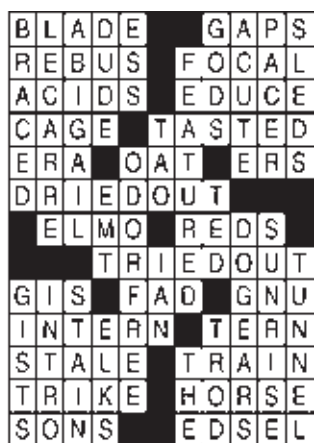
By THOMAS JOSEPH

## ACROSS

- 1 Suit
- 6 Molten rock
- 11 In the know
- 12 Wise saying
- 13 Exeter's county
- 14 Jitterbug's cousin
- 15 Starts
- 17 Way off
- 19 Nest egg acct.
- 20 That guy's
- 23 Wise answerer
- 25 Lose color
- 26 2000 Bruce Willis film
- 28 Easter symbol
- 29 Refused
- 30 Spot
- 31 Pilot's place
- 32 Take a stab at
- 33 George's wife
- 35 Amorous archer
- 38 Egypt neighbor
- 41 Kept in reserve
- 42 Writer Glasgow
- 43 Muscularly fit
- 44 Sacked out

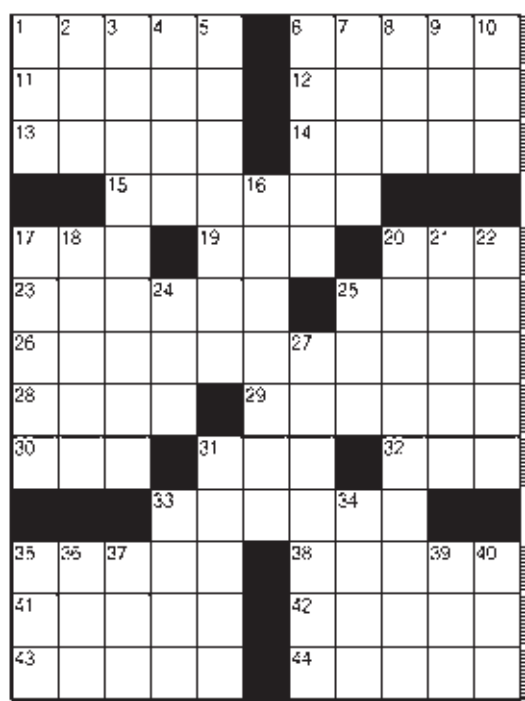
## DOWN

- 1 Misbehaving
- 2 Lamb's mother
- 3 Flattering
- 4 Steel ingredient
- 5 Kind of strength
- 6 Island south of Sicily
- 7 Symmetry line
- 8 Martini base
- 9 Like '60s fashions
- 10 Writer Tan
- 16 Book lover's device
- 17 Game no-nos



Yesterday's answer

- 18 Palmer, to his fans
- 20 Fit to live in
- 21 Lazy fellow
- 22 Squalid
- 24 Blubber
- 25 Summer cooler
- 27 Cooking pots
- 31 Blasé
- 33 Cats' quarries
- 34 Sledding site
- 35 Guest's bed
- 36 First número
- 37 Sewing aid
- 39 Slangy agreement
- 40 Busy worker



2-24

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-24

## CRYPTOQUOTE

HMFA MFVVLOT DT OQA FT

DNVQCAFOA FT MQH BQG

CLFEA AQ HMFA MFVVLOT.

— AMFJJLGT ZQSFT

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: WHEN YOU HIRE PEOPLE WHO ARE SMARTER THAN YOU ARE, YOU PROVE THAT YOU ARE SMARTER THAN THEY ARE. — R.H. GRANT

# U.N.: Wildfires getting worse globally, governments unprepared

By MATTHEW BROWN

Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) —

A warming planet and changes to land use patterns mean more wildfires will scorch large parts of the globe in coming decades, causing spikes in unhealthy smoke pollution and other problems that governments are ill prepared to confront, according to a U.N. report released Wednesday.

The Western U.S., northern Siberia, central India, and eastern Australia already are seeing more blazes, and the likelihood of catastrophic wildfires globally could increase by a third by 2050 and more than 50% by the turn of the century, according to the report from the United Nations Environment Program. Areas once considered safe from major fires won't be immune, including the Arctic, which the report said was "very likely to experience a significant increase in burning." Tropical forests in Indonesia and the southern Amazon of South America also are likely to see increased wildfires, the report concluded.

"Uncontrollable and devastating wildfires are becoming an expected part of the seasonal calendars in many parts of the world," said Andrew Sullivan, with



Firefighters work at the scene of forest fire near Kyuyorelyakh village at Gorny Ulus area, west of Yakutsk, in Russia Thursday, Aug. 5, 2021.

Associated Press

the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in Australia, one of the report's authors. The report describes a worsening cycle: Climate change brings more drought and higher temperatures that make it easy for fires to start and spread, and in turn those blazes release more climate-changing carbon into the atmosphere as they burn through forests and peatland.

But U.N. researchers said many nations continue to spend too much time and money fighting fires and not enough trying to prevent them. Land use changes can make the fires worse, such as logging that leaves behind debris that can easily burn and forests that are intentionally ignited to clear land for farming, the report said. Poor communities are often hit hardest by fires,

which can degrade water quality, destroy crops and reduce land available to grow food. □

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Week 9/1218 (16k);  
Week 10/1207 (16k);  
Week 13/1509 (13k);  
Week 14/1308 (13k);  
Week 15/1217 (10k).  
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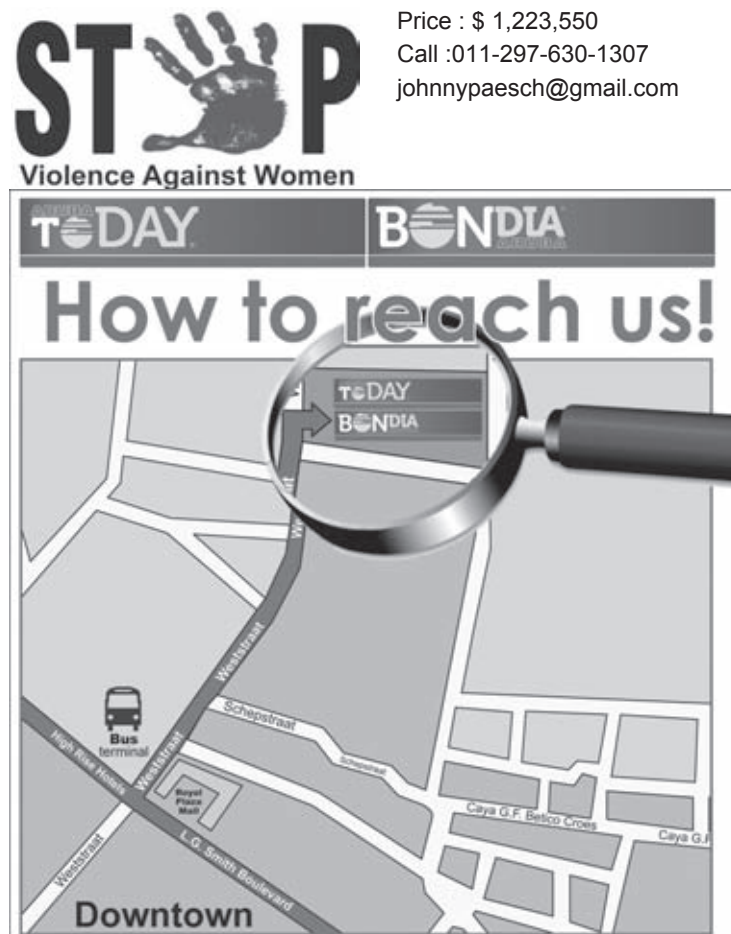
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# New Tears for Fears songs 'plumb the depths of our souls'

By **MARK KENNEDY**

**AP Entertainment Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Creating the first Tears for Fears album of new material in 17 years didn't initially go too well.

The duo went into the studio with an array of songwriters to try and tease out a modern hit single. But they ended up with a bunch of songs that sounded like they were trying to write a modern hit single.

"We don't like choosing something for the sake of sounding contemporary. It irritates us," says Roland Orzabal, half of the duo. Adds his bandmate, Curt Smith: "If it has no depth, it has no meaning to me."

They took the songs that worked and then went back to basics — just two men and two acoustic guitars, like they'd done when they were teenagers — and eventually emerged "The Tipping Point," a 10-track set that combines their trademark pop writing with thoughtful lyrics.

"There's something about Tears for Fears that's very special," says Smith, 60. "If it's not kind of working, then it's not working. When it does, there's an absolute joy in that."

The new songs include "Break the Man," a celebration of women and a call to end patriarchy, and the rocking "My Demons," an examination of violent extremism. The title track is a heart-wrenching song



**Roland Orzabal, left, and Curt Smith, of the band Tears For Fears, pose for a portrait in Los Angeles on Jan. 19, 2022 to promote their new album "The Tipping Point."**

**Associated Press**

about watching a loved one drift into dementia, inspired sadly by the experience of Orzabal's first wife. "The thing I like about this thing I'm most proud about is that we've managed to really, really plumb the depths of our souls and revealed the suffering," says Orzabal, also 60. "It's so emotional that I can't actually listen to it."

The duo made its mark among the first wave of electronica that ruled the early 1980s airwaves, with hits including "Mad World," "Pale Shelter," "Everybody Wants to Rule the World" and "Shout."

Each album — "The Hurting," "Songs From the Big Chair" and "The Seeds of Love" — was more ambi-

tious than the last, revealing their influences, including Pink Floyd, Steely Dan and Little Feat. Unlike many of their '80s peers, they went to an emotional place, exploring depression, isolation, anxiety and insecurity.

"We also were musically ambitious. A lot of our heroes were exceptional musicians and intelligent people, intelligent artists — Peter Gabriel, Paul Simon, David Bowie. We have never felt like we have ever, ever measured up to them but that's fine because there's lots of space below — the sub-genius space," says Orzabal, laughing.

"What we've combined is great, great pop songs with slightly subversive lyrics," he adds. "Every generation

comes along and discovers 'The Hurting' and it means something to them because that's what they're going through. And what I love about this album is for me. I think we've come full circle."

For "The Tipping Point," the duo kept five songs from their aborted songwriting sessions and holed up in Smith's Los Angeles house to write the rest, with their first track, "No Small Thing," setting the stage. It starts as a simple folk song that builds and deepens into driving rock song, teetering on madness.

"We kind of understood that this had to have a story, had to have a flow, and then we went around filling in the blanks, basically,"

says Smith. He liked the end result, something that surprised even him.

"I just didn't think there was anything missing. By the end of it, when I got to the end of that 10 songs, I'm like, 'I'm happy now. I'm satisfied.' That's the best feeling to have when you leave a studio."

The album's last song — a reworking of "Stay," which first appeared on their 2017 greatest-hits album — is about someone caught in two minds: "Stay, don't stay/Go, don't go/It's all or nothing."

Smith wrote it at a time when he was contemplating leaving Tears for Fears and it evokes "the sadness that you feel if you've got to leave something that's been a huge part of your life behind," he said. "I'm painfully aware that the work we do together is way above what we can do individually."

Orzabal and Smith admit that they're very similar in temperament — sensitive, a little bit arrogant and somewhat bull-headed. "We are very similar," says Orzabal. Compromising in the name of music can be hard with such a band makeup.

"You're trying to find perfection and you're trying to find where each of your sense of perfection in music meet. And that's not an easy thing to do. It really isn't an easy thing to do," says Smith. □



**This image released by FX shows Donald Glover in a scene from the second season of "Atlanta."**

**Associated Press**

## 'Atlanta' to end with season 4; Donald Glover has no regrets

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — There won't be a long wait for the fourth season of FX's "Atlanta," but it will be its last. The Emmy-winning series created by Donald Glover, which begins its third season March 24, will be back in the fall to wrap up the story of Glover's music manager Earn, rapper Paper Boi (Brian Tyree Henry) and their circle, FX said Thursday.

There was a big gap between season two, which

concluded in May 2018, and this season because of scheduling conflicts that delayed production, FX said previously. But the final two seasons have both been shot.

On Thursday, Glover said he has no regrets about wrapping the series.

"To be honest, I wanted to end it after season two," he said during a Q&A with TV critics. "Death is natural...when the conditions are ripe for something,

they happen, and when the conditions aren't right for it, they don't happen."

"I feel like the story was always supposed to be what it was," Glover said.

The upcoming 10-episode season is set largely in Europe, with Earn, Alfred aka Paper Boi, Darius (LaKeith Stanfield) and Van (Zazie Beetz) on tour. Episodes will be available on Hulu after debuting on FX, with past seasons also on the streaming service. □



# Mickelson apologizes for Saudi comments, deal with KPMG ends

By DOUG FERGUSON  
AP Golf Writer

Phil Mickelson apologized Tuesday for comments about the Saudis and a proposed super league, damaging words he claims were off the record and not meant to be shared publicly.

"It was reckless, I offended people, and I am deeply sorry for my choice of words," he said.

The same time as Mickelson's statement, KPMG became the first of his corporate sponsors to announce an immediate end to their partnership, a decision KPMG said was mutual.

"We wish him the best," KPMG said in a statement. Mickelson said of his comments to author and golf writer Alan Shipnuck, "I'm beyond disappointed and will make every effort to self-reflect and learn from this."

In explosive remarks, Mickelson told Shipnuck the Saudis behind a proposed breakaway rival league were "scary mother (expletive)s to get involved with." He also told Shipnuck, who is writing a biography on Mickelson due out in May, that it was worth getting in bed with the Saudis, despite their history of human rights abuses, if it meant a chance to change the PGA Tour.

"We know they killed (Washington Post columnist Jamal) Khashoggi and have a horrible record on



Phil Mickelson walks off the 14th green after missing a birdie putt during the third round at the PGA Championship golf tournament on the Ocean Course, Saturday, May 22, 2021, in Kiawah Island, S.C.

Associated Press

human rights. They execute people over there for being gay," he said. "Knowing all of this, why would I even consider it? Because this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reshape how the PGA Tour operates."

The interview took place last November.

Mickelson said he has always put the interests of golf first, "although it doesn't look this way now given my recent comments."

"There is the problem of off record comments being shared out of context and without my consent," he said. "But the bigger issue is that I used words I sincerely regret that do not reflect

my true feelings or intentions."

Shipnuck wrote on The Fire Pit Collective, where he published Mickelson's comments last week, that "not once did he say our conversation was off-the-record or on background or just between us or anything remotely like that. He simply opened a vein." Shipnuck, who previously wrote for Sports Illustrated, tweeted Tuesday that Mickelson's claims he spoke off the record were "completely false."

Mickelson also apologized to LIV Golf Investments, the group run by Greg Norman and financed mainly by

the Saudi Arabia sovereign wealth fund chaired by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

But he made no mention of the PGA Tour or its commissioner Jay Monahan, which he referred to as a "dictatorship" in the Shipnuck interview. Mickelson also said he and three top players had paid attorneys to write the operating agreement of a rival league. Mickelson's comments would appear to fall under the tour policy of public remarks that unreasonably attack or disparage groups such as the tour.

Mickelson, who last year became the oldest major

champion in history when he won the PGA Championship at age 50, said he has felt pressure and stress affecting him at a deeper level over the last 10 years and he needs time away.

But he did not say if he would be taking a break from golf. He has not played since the Saudi International on Feb. 6. He is not playing this week. His statement concluded, "I know I have not been my best and desperately need some time away to prioritize the ones I love most and work on being the man I want to be." Mickelson said he would not want to compromise his corporate partners and he has given them the option of pausing or ending their relationships with him.

At the heart of his statement was his claim that he has acted in the best interest of golf, the players, sponsors and the fans, "although it doesn't look this way now given my recent comments."

He also said he needs to be accountable "despite my belief that some changes have already been made within the overall discourse."

The PGA Tour has made changes to reward top players amid the threat of the possible Saudi league, launching a "Player Impact Program" that compensates stars for popularity and social-media impressions. Mickelson claimed he won the PIP in its first year. □

## Djokovic beats Khachanov in Dubai for 2nd win of year

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Top-ranked Novak Djokovic won his second match — and first tiebreaker — of the year when he beat Karen Khachanov 6-3, 7-6 (2) on Wednesday to advance to the quarterfinals of the Dubai Championships. Djokovic couldn't defend his Australian Open title last month because he was deported from the country for not being vaccinated against the coro-

navirus. The 34-year-old Serb said he's missed playing competitively.

"This is my life, this is what I've known to do and I still keep on going for the last 20 years almost," Djokovic said in his on-court interview after beating his Russian opponent.

"Professional tennis is my love. I enjoy traveling, I enjoy playing, I enjoy hopefully bringing some positive emotions and memories to people that come to

watch."

Djokovic is a five-time winner at the event. He will next play Czech qualifier Jiri Vesely, who advanced by beating eighth-seeded Roberto Bautista Agut 6-2, 6-4.

American qualifier Mackenzie McDonald beat Filip Krajinovic 6-4, 7-6 (7) to set up a quarterfinal against second-seeded Andrey Rublev of Russia. McDonald had upset another Russian, seventh-seeded



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates after he beats Russia's Karen Khachanov during a match of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022.


Associated Press

Aslan Karatsev, in the first round.

Rublev, who won the Open 13 tournament in Marseille

on Sunday, reached the quarterfinals by beating Soonwoo Kwon 4-6, 6-0, 6-3. □





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## MLB lockout could cost Scherzer \$232K daily, Cole \$193K



Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Max Scherzer tosses the ball during the third inning of the team's baseball game against the Colorado Rockies on Sept. 23, 2021, in Denver.

Associated Press

By RONALD BLUM  
AP Baseball Writer

**JUPITER, Fla. (AP)** — Sometime soon, lockout costs become real: Max Scherzer would forfeit \$232,975 for each regular-season day lost, and Gerrit Cole \$193,548.

Based on last year's base salaries that totaled just over \$3.8 billion, major league players would combine to lose \$20.5 million for each day wiped off the 186-day regular-season

schedule.

Major League Baseball has told the players' association a labor deal must be reached by Monday in order for opening day to come off as scheduled on March 31 and a 162-game season to remain intact. The union hasn't said whether it believes that deadline, and there likely is some leeway based on timing after the 1990 lockout, the 1994-95 strike and the 2020 pandemic delay.

Talks resumed this week in the second-longest work stoppage in baseball history, which started Dec. 2. A player at management's proposed \$630,000 minimum would lose \$3,387 for each day he's not on a big league roster, the amount rising to \$4,167 under the union's offer of a \$775,000 minimum.

While medical insurance would expire after March 31 for players in the major leagues when last season ended, the union would pay COBRA payments to continue their coverage and also will cover the subsidy usually paid for the medical coverage of former players.

It's harder to calculate what owners of the 30 teams would lose if games are lost, but a similar amount is likely.

While players received about half of industry revenue that reached a high of \$9.7 billion in 2019 (a percentage that includes spending on draft picks and international amateurs), they are paid during the regular season, and teams receive a substantial percentage of revenue from the postseason.

For players, the cost is clear: Each earns 1/186th of his base salary each day.

Scherzer and Cole are on the union's eight-man executive subcommittee, which supervises the negotiations. Among others in the union's leadership group, the daily price comes to \$172,043 for Francisco Lindor, \$134,409 for Marcus Semien, \$75,269 for Zack Britton, \$32,258 for James Paxton and \$20,161 for Jason Castro. Andrew Miller, the other member, is among the hundreds of players who remained unsigned heading into the transaction freeze that began with the lockout. □

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